

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSM-03 /076 W
-----077607 191125Z /11

O R 191015Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2669
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NOCVSIA
USMISSION USUN NY
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 5184

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT IS
SUBJ: TWO PEACE RALLIES IN RETROSPECT

REFS: (A) TEL AVIV 5015 (NOTAL, (B) TEL AVIV 4695 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: SATURDAY'S "SECURE PEACE"
RALLY HAS HAD REMARKABLY LIMITED IMPACT ON POLITICAL
THINKING HERE. THIS IS EXPLAINED BY THE FACT THAT
THIS SELF-PROCLAIMED "MOVEMENT" REPRESENTS LITTLE
MORE THAN A MOMENTARY REFLEX ACTION. UNLIKE
"PEACE NOW," WHICH PROVOKED IT, THE "SECURE PEACE"
RALLY DOES NOT PORTEND A NEW, POTENTIALLY ACTIVE FORCE ON THE
POLITICAL SCENE, THE VEHICLE FOR POLITICAL EXPRESSION
BY A GROUP WHICH FEELS UNREPRESENTED (ON CENTRAL
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FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES) WITHIN THE POLITICAL PARTY
STRUCTURE. "PEACE NOW'S" FORTUNES WILL TO A GREAT
EXTENT BE DETERMINED BY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS.
SO FAR THE TWO "MOVEMENTS" HAVE NOT POLARIZED THE
COUNTRY TO ANY SIGNIFICANT DEGREE. MK RUBENSTEIN,
IN HAARETZ, ELOQUENTLY ARTICULATES THE SENTI-
MENTS OF MANY "PEACE NOW" SUPPORTERS. END SUMMARY

2. IT MIGHT BE WORTHWHILE, AFTER THE DUST HAS SETTLED FROM SATURDAY NIGHT'S "SECURE PEACE" RALLY (REFTEL A), TO OFFER A PERSPECTIVE ON THIS "MOVEMENT" AND ITS DOVISH COUNTERPART, "PEACE NOW." WE HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE LIMITED IMPACT OF THE SATURDAY DEMONSTRATION, ESPECIALLY IN COMPARISON WITH THE "PEACE NOW" RALLY, WHICH INVOLVED NUMEROUS COMMENTARIES AND FORECASTS, AND SET OFF INTENSE POLITICAL REVERBERATIONS. WHAT LITTLE ATTENTION HAS BEEN PAID TO THE LATEST RALLY, HAS FOCUSED ON A COMPARISON OF CROWD TURNOUTS. IN OUR VIEW, REPORTS OF A 30,000 TO 70,000 TURNOUT LAST SATURDAY INDICATE THAT CROWD ESTIMATION IS MORE AN ART THAN AN EXACT SCIENCE IN ISRAEL.

3. IN OUR JUDGMENT, MEDIA ATTEMPTS TO COMPARE THE SIZE OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS, AND TO INFER CERTAIN LEVELS OF SUPPORT FOR AN OPPOSITION TO BEGIN'S POLICIES, MISSES THE POINT. HEADCOUNT ANALYSIS OVERLOOKS THE CRUCIAL FACT THAT "PEACE NOW" REPRESENTS A POTENTIALLY ACTIVE NEW FORCE ON THE POLITICAL SCENE, WHILE "SECURE PEACE" SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A MOMENTARY REACTION TO THE EARLY SUCCESS OF "PEACE NOW". "SECURE PEACE" IS NOT THE KERNAL OF A NEW, CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTINUING PRESSURE GROUP OR MOVEMENT. UNLIKE "PEACE NOW", IT IS NOT A VEHICLE FOR EXPRESSION BY A SEGMENT OF THE PUBLIC WHO FEELS ITS (FOREIGN POLICY) VIEWS ARE NOT BEING FULLY REPRESENTED WITHIN THE POLITICAL PARTY STRUCTURE. WHILE THE INCIPIENT DOVISHNESS (COMPARATIVELY) OF A LARGE PORTION OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC CLASS IS NOT A NEW DEVELOPMENT, ITS TRANSLATION INTO TERMS OF POLITICAL ACTION IS. IN CONTRAST, "SECURE PEACE" MUST BE VIEWED AS A REFLEX ACTION BY A PUBLIC WHOSE VIEWS ARE ALREADY EFFECTIVELY REPRESENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND HERUT.

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4. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT "PEACE NOW" WILL DEVELOP BEYOND ITS PRESENT INCARNATION BY BROADENING ITS SUPPORT BASE, PROFESSIONALIZING ITS ORGANIZATION, OR WIDENING ITS SCOPE OF CONCERNS. THE FORTUNES OF "PEACE NOW" WILL BE IN LARGE PART DETERMINED BY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: A PERIOD OF NEGOTIATIONS STALEMATE, INDUCED LARGELY BY FACTORS OTHER THAN BEGIN'S NEGOTIATING ERRORS - AS THE CURRENT SITUATION IS PERCEIVED BY "PEACE NOW" - WOULD NOT PROVIDE FERTILE GROUND FOR THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF SUCH A MOVEMENT. IF AND WHEN THE PEACE PROCESS AGAIN BECOMES A MORE CONCRETE REALITY, HOWEVER, PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT POLICY WILL BE DESTABILIZED, AND "PEACE NOW" MAY BECOME A BELLWEATHER OF SHIFTS IN THE PUBLIC MOOD.
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5. IT IS ALSO DIFFICULT AT THIS POINT TO PREDICT TO WHAT EXTENT THE TWO MOVEMENTS WILL POLARIZE PUBLIC OPINION ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES (REFTEL B). THE APPEARANCE AND IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF "PEACE NOW" DID HAVE AN INITIAL POLARIZING EFFECT. FOR THE REASON CITED ABOVE HOWEVER, IT HAS SO FAR BEEN LIMITED AND MAY ONLY BECOME SIGNIFICANT ONCE

NEGOTIATIONS ARE AGAIN JOINED AND THE GOVERNMENT IS ONCE MORE EXPOSED TO CHARGES OF IDEOLOGICAL OBSTINACY.

6. IRONICALLY, THE SENTIMENTS AND RATIONALE WHICH MOTIVATE THE "PEACE NOW" PEOPLE HAVE BEEN MOST ELOQUENTLY EXPRESSED BY MK ARNON RUBENSTEIN, A LEADER OF THE PARTY WHICH MANY IF NOT MOST OF THE "PEACE NOW" ACTIVISTS DESERTED IN BITTER DISILLUSIONMENT. RUBENSTEIN RECENTLY WROTE IN HAARETZ: "IF, HEAVEN FORBID, THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS ULTIMATELY YIELDS NOTHING, AND THE SWEET FORETASTE OF PEACE SHOULD VANISH, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE, AND OUR SONS, KNOW THAT THIS UNIQUE CHANCE HAS GONE THROUGH NO FAULT OF OUR OWN; THAT IS WAS NOT THE SETTLEMENTS OR PSEUDO-MESSIANIC DOCTRINES THAT WERE TO BLAME; BUT PEACE WAS PREVENTED BECAUSE WE SAFEGUARDED OUR SECURITY AND DEFENCE RIGHTS, INSTEAD OF STANDING WATCH OVER WOULD-BE ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN SHILOH; BECAUSE WE TURNED OVER EVERY STONE, SEARCHED EVERY CRACK IN THE WALL AND EXPLORED EVERY AVENUE FOR BRINGING PEACE TO THIS COUNTRY. THIS IS THE ONE AND ONLY MEANING OF A NATIONAL CONSENSUS: A FATEFUL ISSUE SUCH AS PEACE OR WAR MUST BE DECIDED BY CONSIDERATIONS DEEMED VITAL BY THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE. THOSE WHO DEMAND THAT WE BACK GOVERNMENT POLICY UNQUESTIONINGLY HAVE A DIFFERENT CONSENSUS IN MIND - THE KIND THAT WILL NOT SAVE THE SITUATION EVEN IF THE GO'S SHIP FOUNDERS ON THE ROCKS OF REALITY." LEWIS

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